

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows: ..

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1. (3X Amended) A metal carrying sleeve for continuous printing and transfer forms, the carrying sleeve consisting essentially of: a rectangular, thin-walled flat metal sheet, that is bent to a desired hollow cylindrical form so that two edges of the flat sheet face one another; a metal weld seam that permanently connects together only the facing edges of the sheet so that the sheet is slidable onto a printing cylinder via pressurized air, the weld seam having an initial crowned configuration; and a homogeneous, continuous and uniform outer circumferential metal surface including the weld seam and formed by processing the surface and the crowned configuration of the weld seam so that one of format variable continuous printing is possible and a layer structure is placeable on the entire outer circumferential surface, including the weld seam.

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8. (3X Amended) A process for producing a carrying sleeve for printing and transfer forms, which sleeve is slidable onto a printing cylinder, comprising the steps of: cutting a base plate from thin-walled sheet metal drawn from a roll and in a flat state to a size corresponding to a circumference and breadth of a printing cylinder;
- bending the base plate into a desired cylindrical form so that two edges of the base plate face one another;

permanently connecting together the two edges of the base plate with a welded metal seam that has an outwardly directed crown and so that the cylindrical base plate is expandable by pressurized air so that it can be slid onto the printing cylinder; and

processing [the entire sleeve surface, including] the crown[,] to form a homogeneous, uniform continuous outer surface formed of an outer sleeve surface and the weld seam so that format variable continuous printing is possible.

(3X Amended)

A process for producing an offset printing form, comprising the steps

of:

producing a carrying sleeve for printing and transfer forms, which sleeve is slidable onto a printing cylinder, by cutting a base plate from thin-walled sheet metal drawn from a roll and in a flat state to a size corresponding to a circumference and breadth of a printing cylinder;

bending the base plate into a desired cylindrical form so that two edges of the base plate face one another;

permanently connecting together the two edges of the base plate with a welded metal seam that has an outwardly directed crown and so that the cylindrical base plate is expandable by pressurized air so that it can be slid onto the printing cylinder; and

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processing [the entire sleeve surface, including] the crown[,] to form a homogeneous, continuous uniform outer surface formed of an outer sleeve surface and the weld seam, the processing step including chemically roughening and anodizing the hollow cylindrical form of the base plate and subsequently providing a photosensitive coating on the outer surface of the cylindrical form so as to create a printing form sleeve for format variable continuous printing.

14. (3X Amended) A process for producing a gravure printing form, comprising the steps of:

producing a carrying sleeve for printing and transfer forms, which sleeve is slidable onto a printing cylinder, by cutting a base plate from thin-walled sheet metal drawn from a roll and in a flat state to a size corresponding to a circumference and breadth of a printing cylinder, bending the base plate into a desired cylindrical form so that two edges of the base plate face one another, permanently connecting together the two edges of the base plate with a welded metal seam that has an outwardly directed crown and so that the cylindrical base plate is expandable by pressurized air so that it can be slid onto the printing cylinder, processing the [entire sleeve surface, including] the crown[,] to form a homogeneous, continuous uniform outer surface formed of an outer sleeve surface and the weld seam; and

applying a metal coat to the processed outer surface and then mechanically processing the metal coat.

16. (3X Amended) A process for producing a transfer form, comprising the steps of:

producing a carrying sleeve for printing and transfer forms, which sleeve is slidable onto a printing cylinder, by cutting a base plate from thin-walled sheet metal drawn from a roll and in a flat state to a size corresponding to a circumference and breadth of a printing cylinder, bending the base plate into a desired cylindrical form so that two edges of the base plate face one another, permanently connecting together the two edges of the base plate with a welded metal seam that has an outwardly directed crown and so that the cylindrical base plate is expandable by pressurized air so that it can be slid onto the printing cylinder, and processing the [entire sleeve surface, including] the crown[,] to form a homogeneous, continuous uniform outer surface formed of an outer sleeve surface and the weld seam; and

applying an endless rubber coating to the entire processed sleeve surface.

17. (3X Amended) A process for producing a printing form, comprising the steps of:

producing a carrying sleeve for printing and transfer forms, which sleeve is slidable onto a printing cylinder, by cutting a base plate from thin-walled sheet metal drawn from a roll and in a flat state to a size corresponding to a circumference and breadth of a printing cylinder, bending the base plate into a desired cylindrical form so that two edges of the base plate face one another, permanently connecting together the two edges of the base plate with a welded metal seam that has an outwardly directed crown and so that the cylindrical base plate is expandable by pressurized air so that it can be slid onto the printing cylinder, and processing

[the entire sleeve surface, including] the crown[,] to form a homogeneous, continuous uniform outer surface formed of an outer sleeve surface and the weld seam; and

applying an endless ceramic coat to the entire processed sleeve surface.

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